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AT-3444

20 November 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General

SUBJECT: Management of Psychologists in a Large Agency

1. The basic concept in the attached paper is that psychological knowledge and techniques are applicable to an extremely diverse set of problems. The first question for management to answer is: What problems are deemed of sufficient importance to require use of these techniques? The professional question then becomes: What techniques are most appropriate? Does the problem lend itself to solution by simple testing techniques? Should the emphasis be placed on training or on selection techniques as an initial step? Does the problem require the application of thoroughgoing assessment procedures?

2. The concept that everybody in the Agency should be assessed and reassessed may be used as one illustration of the kind of questions that automatically arise. Some of these questions are:

a. For what purpose or purposes are these individuals to be assessed?

b. Do all these purposes require extensive assessment, or are some of them adapted to the use of simpler techniques?

c. At what point or points in the individual's career should psychological techniques for these purposes be applied?

d. How should information be obtained from supervisors and others in the Agency concerning the individual, such information being clearly essential to the evaluation of an individual's worth?

Such questions as the above make clear that it is not sufficient to state who should be assessed; it is also necessary to say for what purpose, and to inquire who should be involved and how the information should be brought together for a final decision.

3. Problems concerning supervisors can serve as another illustration, since both the need for techniques for selecting them as well as training them have to be considered. Should more systematic psychological techniques be applied to the problem of selecting supervisors? Can this selection process be different for different levels or kinds of supervision? Should a screening type program be developed which would set certain minimum standards in terms of particular qualities found by research to be necessary for success as a supervisor in this Agency? Should the thoroughgoing assessment process be called into play where the supervisory problem peculiar to

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clandestine operation are involved? On the training side, should particular effort be made to acquaint supervisors with basic human motivations as a means of increasing their skill in dealing with people? Should psychologists also devote part of their effort to conducting training courses to assist supervisors in evaluating their subordinates?

4. The above analyses are intended as illustrative only. They are in no sense exhaustive or systematic, but serve to indicate the kind of selection management has to make in determining how relatively limited psychological resources can be utilized for the best interest of the Agency.

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 Chief
Assessment and Evaluation Staff